United Nations A/60/PV.79

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

79th plenary meeting
Monday, 8 May 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: This afternoon, the General Assembly will first consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 122, 124, 125, 127, 130, 132, 122 together with 124, 128, 129 and 136, and 122.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance. This means that where recorded or separate votes were taken, we will do the same. I should also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 122 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/60/609/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it one draft resolution, recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/254).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 122.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

06-34359 (E)

Agenda item 124 (*continued*)

Proposed programme budget for biennium 2006-2007

Reports of the Fifth Committee (A/60/608/Add.1 and Add.2)

The President: The Assembly will take up the two reports of the Fifth Committee on this item.

The delegation of the United States has asked to speak in explanation of vote before the vote.

Mr. Wallace (United States of America): The United States appreciates and supports the work of the Secretariat on the Capital Master Plan, in particular the efforts of Assistant-Secretary-General Fritz Reuter in the Capital Master Plan Office, to implement a cost-effective project. We support the Capital Master Plan and the very strongly needed renovations to make the United Nations facilities safe and secure. We look forward to continuing to work with other Member States to reach a final decision on a project strategy. We look forward to working with all Members to reach decisions on a successful basis. This is an urgent project to ensure all United Nations employees work in a safe and secure environment.

A General Assembly decision on a strategy is critical. To ensure continued progress on the project, we endorse a $23.5 million appropriation for the continuation of pre-construction activities, and we expect, based upon the firm assurances of the Secretariat, that the United Nations will not need to utilize the $77 million in commitment authority before the second resumed session of the Fifth Committee. We hope by the second resumed session Member States will be prepared to reach a final decision on the Capital Master Plan strategy. We pledge to work constructively and cooperatively to resolve all outstanding issues. At this time, without a decision on project strategy, the United States disassociates itself from consensus on this resolution.

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report in A/60/608/Add.1.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/255).

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report in A/60/608/Add.2.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Capital master plan". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/256).

The President: The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic has asked to speak in explanation of vote after the vote.

Mr. Al-Nuqari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation joined in the consensus on the draft resolution recommended in A/60/608/Add.1, entitled "Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007", particularly part I, regarding the financing of special political missions.

Before explaining our agreement with the consensus, I would like to express our thanks for the efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan as part of his functions under the Charter. I would also like to say that our joining in the consensus goes hand in hand with the flexibility shown by our delegation and speaks of our respect for this Organization and its role and functions.

When my country objected to the mandate with regard to Syria, we based ourselves on the need to respect the Charter as well as to respect the fact that the budget proposals have to be in line with resolution 55/231. I would like to stress that the fact that we are going along with this resolution is based on respect for the following principle, i.e., that the mandate of the resolution is clear. Syria has implemented everything with regard to this mandate, as recognized by the Security Council.

Secondly, the first and second performance indicators — regarding the establishment of the border and the establishment of diplomatic relations — that are contained in the report of the Secretary-General are in contradiction with the above-mentioned mandate. The establishment of diplomatic relations and the drawing of the border between two countries are two matters within the jurisdiction of the Member States

involved, and United Nations bodies should not intervene — not even the Security Council or the Secretariat. This is in conformity with paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states, "Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state ...".

There is also the need to scrupulously respect paragraphs 9 and 10 of part I of the resolution when the mandate of the special envoy is being studied with regard to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1550 (2004).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 124.

Agenda item 125

Programme planning

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/60/747)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/257).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 125.

Agenda item 127 (*continued*)

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/60/601/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/236 B).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 127.

Agenda item 130

Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/60/748)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/258).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 130.

Agenda item 132 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/60/604/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/259).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 132.

Agenda items 122, 124, 128 and 129 (*continued*) and 136

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Human resources management

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/60/831)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

I shall now give the floor to the representative of Japan, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): My delegation supports the commitment of the Secretary-General to reform the Organization so that it can better respond to current needs and make the Organization a more effective, efficiency and accountable one. We have actively and constructively participated in the discussion on his report entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide", and we will continue to be actively engaged in future discussions.

My delegation believes also that many of the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report do not require legislative action at this juncture, as rightly pointed out by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report (A/60/735). My delegation therefore urges the Secretary-General to implement those measures with which he can proceed without legislative action.

In the Fifth Committee on 17 April, my delegation made a humble request to the promoters of draft resolution A/C.5/60/L.37/Rev.1, before the vote in the Fifth Committee, not to seek action. It was a plea not to breach the longstanding practice of working by consensus in the Fifth Committee and to continue negotiations in good faith.

The Secretary-General, for his part, made a sincere effort to preserve the well-established and valuable practice of consensus by making his suggestions and proposals 20 and 21. My delegation appreciated the Secretary-General's efforts in that regard. We appreciated also the last-minute efforts made by the Group of 77 and the European Union. We were disappointed at the failure to reach agreement in those efforts.

Our position throughout on this question has been that it would have been far preferable for the Fifth Committee to report back to the plenary areas of agreement and disagreement faithfully and accurately so that it could consider the way forward. It is regrettable that that has not been the case. We regret that, despite all the efforts made, a vote had to be taken in the Fifth Committee.

Mr. President, in the last few days, you yourself made efforts to avert a vote in plenary under certain conditions. Again, we regret that your efforts failed to bear fruit. My delegation is disappointed that we had to vote on draft resolution A/C.5/60/L.37/Rev.1, which clearly did not enjoy a consensus. Voting in the Fifth Committee was in breach of the Committee's longstanding consensus practice.

We regret that today we have to vote once again in plenary on this matter. My delegation, for the reasons I have just cited, will have no choice but to cast a negative vote. The outcome of the vote would send a strong message — more negative than positive. There would be no winners in this vote, and, if there are any losers, it will be reforms of the Organization. If the draft resolution is adopted, it will be likely to be interpreted as, at best, rejection or deferral of the necessary reforms. We therefore ask those delegations that feel uneasy about sending such a message to vote against or to abstain in the voting.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide".

We shall now proceed to a recorded vote, as was done in the Fifth Committee.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia,

Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Palau, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Norway, Uganda.

The draft resolution was adopted by 121 votes to 50, with 2 abstentions (resolution 60/260).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Armenia informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The President: I shall now give the floor to those representatives wishing to make statements in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): I should like to make a general statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Group of 77 and China hopes that, with the adoption of this resolution, we will all move ahead and deal with the reform of the United Nations. There are many issues that await our collective decision, and it is time we focused on the future and helped to strengthen the Organization. On many occasions, we have gone on record to say that we welcome the proposals submitted to us by the Secretary-General that will help strengthen the Organization's ability to implement its mandates more effectively and enable it to serve the interests of the entire membership.

The Group of 77 and China has been supportive of a number of major reforms. We supported the approval of the resources needed for the Human Rights Council, which will be voted on tomorrow. It was the Group of 77 and China that fought to have a Peacebuilding Support Office be funded from predictable new resources and not from within existing budget levels or through the establishment of temporary posts.

It is the Group of 77 and China that wants to ensure that we deal with development challenges in more concrete and tangible ways. As of today, we are still waiting for our negotiating partners to join in a consensus that will build on the Global Partnership for Development, which was confirmed by the September summit.

We of the Group of 77 and China were instrumental in the approval of the amount of $100 million that the Secretary-General urgently needed to proceed with the capital master plan. It was the developing countries that have always insisted that the Secretary-General should receive adequate and predictable resources to undertake effectively the numerous tasks of the Organization. It was also the Group of 77 and China that supported the budget level requested by the Secretary-General in 2004, as opposed to the spending cap.

Since the adoption of the outcome document last September, the Group of 77 and China has supported the creation of an Ethics Office, the finalization of a whistleblower policy and an increase in the investigation and auditing capacity of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

Clearly, the suggestion that the Group of 77 and China is somehow blocking or delaying reform is at best misleading and, at worst, absolutely untrue.

We want to reassure all Member States that the resolution we have just adopted does not in any way delay or prevent the reform of the United Nations. In fact, a careful reading of the resolution will show that many of the proposals in it are meant to take this Organization further and make it even better. A large part of the resolution captures areas in which there is general agreement among Member States about their importance and necessity. The exceptions are those proposals that would amend the oversight of the Member States through the General Assembly.

In addition to the governance issues, the elements of the resolution on which we differed with our negotiating partners were on the enforcement of gender targets in the Secretariat; ensuring equitable geographic representation in the recruitment of the Secretariat, in particular at senior levels; and increasing procurement opportunities for developing countries. Those elements are important to developing countries, and to suggest that fighting for them would detract from the reform initiatives of the Secretary-General is indeed misleading.

Everyone in this Assembly Hall knows that this Organization does not reflect the international character of its membership, in particular at senior levels that seem to be monopolized by nationals from a few countries. That is so despite repeated calls on that matter by the General Assembly. The suggestion that nationals from developing countries are somehow less qualified and not able to meet the standards that we have set for our international civil servants in the Charter of the United Nations is also untrue.

The Secretariat must stop paying more than just lip service to the calls to ensure a greater gender balance and equitable geographical representation in the recruitment and promotion of its staff. Our resolution merely asks for proposals on gender targets and geographical distribution to be included in the September 2006 report. To suggest that those requests will delay the proposals of the Secretary-General or halt the reform exercise is false.

The June report on procurement will, inter alia, elaborate on the Secretary-General's proposal to move towards a lead agency concept, where provisions of General Assembly resolutions may not apply. Our resolution simply requests that an assessment of the internal controls of those organizations be undertaken to ensure effective oversight. The Group of 77 and China are therefore not delaying reform by asking that Member States receive assurances that the provisions of General Assembly resolutions will be respected and that effective internal controls will be in place.

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China support the Secretary-General as chief administrative officer of the United Nations. The Secretary-General is elected by the Member States and therefore we believe that he is accountable to the General Assembly. For that reason, we did not understand or even accept the idea that, if the Secretary-General is to carry out his duties, that must be accompanied by denying the majority of Member States the right to pronounce on the administration of the United Nations. The Group of 77 and China have continued to maintain that for a so-called small but representative group of Member States to replace the role of all Member States in carrying out the oversight responsibilities of the General Assembly is an attempt to deny every Member of the United Nations the role due to it.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): On behalf of the European Union, I would like to stress that management reform is vital to strengthening the United Nations. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Investing in the United Nations", and encourage him to continue his reform efforts. We would like to see a more detailed elaboration of those proposals, and we ask the Secretary-General to take action in those areas where no legislative mandate is needed.

The European Union could not agree to the adoption of the present resolution, as it does not reflect crucial concerns of its members and other countries. We are of the firm belief that, at this early stage, pending more detailed information and without a request for action, proposals should not be selectively rejected, amended or convoluted with conditions.

The European Union, as all here know, made every possible effort to reach a consensus on the

resolution. Those efforts have failed. The request for action on a non-consensus resolution has resulted in a vote. That is regrettable. Decisions on sensitive political matters need the support of all Member States.

During the developments leading up to the adoption of the resolution, we experienced a collapse of the consensus principle in the Fifth Committee, which should be a matter of serious concern to all of us. All efforts need to be made to restore the long-standing working methods of the Committee.

It is now time to take a forward-looking approach. We need to re-establish a climate of trust and cooperation. We need to engage in consensus-based decision-making. We all need to work together to make the United Nations stronger.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): On behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, I wish briefly to explain our vote against resolution 60/260.

We set out our concerns over both procedure and substance when action was taken in the Fifth Committee on 28 April. I do not intend to repeat those concerns, though our objections remain unchanged, and we would repeat our hope, expressed then, that the Secretary-General will proceed with the mandates he already has.

We were deeply disappointed that, despite efforts to avoid that, the submission of a draft resolution on which there was clearly no consensus went ahead in the Fifth Committee, leaving Canada, Australia and New Zealand no option but to vote against it. We strongly believe, looking ahead, that the practice of consensus decision-making in the Fifth Committee should be restored and the climate of trust renewed.

On that positive note, it is heartening that, over the past few days, so many have spoken of the need to look ahead, to look forward and to direct our efforts to producing as much progress as we can over the coming weeks. Ambassador Kumalo, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, has just now reaffirmed that commitment and we welcome his words. To renew our efforts is indeed the challenge for all of us. Canada, Australia and New Zealand will continue to work with the Secretary-General and all Member States on management reform.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): The United States, on 28 April, gave a statement in the Fifth Committee explaining its vote on this item. That position still stands. Since others have taken the floor on the occasion of today's vote, I would like to make several additional points.

The United States strongly supports a United Nations that is sharply focused on addressing the challenges of today's world in efficient and effective ways. The Fifth Committee's consideration of the Secretary-General's report on United Nations management reforms was supposed to have been an important part of a process leading to a more efficient and effective Organization — a process that our leaders started last year with their historic consensus agreement on the world summit outcome document.

Unfortunately, the vote on management reforms in the Fifth Committee, as well as the vote called for today in the General Assembly, raise deep concerns about the breach of the consensus decision-making principle that has been the practice of the Fifth Committee for nearly two decades. Let me just review for a minute how that practice developed.

From the perspective of the United States, it developed because, in the mid-1980s, the United States was repeatedly and overwhelmingly outvoted in the Fifth Committee on important budget questions. The consequence was that the United States Congress withheld substantial appropriations from the United States assessed contribution, so the practice of consensus-based decision-making in this Organization on budgetary matters was intended to reflect clearly the opinions of all United Nations Members.

During the past 20 years, as early as the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were doubts whether the consensus budgeting approach was working to fulfil the intentions that had led to its creation in the first place. In fact, the current situation, as reflected in today's vote, raises that question again. The result of consensus-based decision-making in the Fifth Committee is often the same, in fact, as today's vote, so when we are asked, whether in Congress or elsewhere, "What is the real distribution of opinion in the United Nations on budget questions?", we can fairly say that it is reflected in today's vote.

So, one might well then ask what is gained by the consensus process. We believe that many comfortable elements of the governance of this Organization now need to come under scrutiny, as the Secretary-General and others have suggested. We maintain our view on consensus decision-making on budget matters, but we

are carefully evaluating how it actually works — as is appropriate after 20 years.

Mr. Arias Cárdenas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to make a general statement. We support the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My nation believes in, and practices, constructive dialogue. Dialogue is an essential tool in reaching agreement; in this forum it is indispensable if we are to bring about a more efficient, trustworthy Organization, where mechanisms of accountability enable Member States to exercise the authority granted them under the Charter and under the Assembly's rules of procedure. We recognize that consensus is the best way to reach agreements, because the quest for the collective good should take precedence over individual interests.

It is the prerogative of Member States, through the General Assembly, to take decisions relating to the administration and the budget of the Organization. The Secretariat should focus its efforts on ensuring and facilitating the competencies of Member States, taking into account the principle of the sovereign equality of Member States, which is established in Article 2 of the Charter.

The draft resolution just adopted reflects the greatest possible degree of agreement on the matters before the Assembly. But we want to make it clear that this agreement was not reached through consensus, but through the also democratic procedure of a vote because of the inclusion of a few proposals intended to undermine the role of the General Assembly and which would have jeopardized the intergovernmental nature of the Organization.

The process of Secretariat reform should be a multilateral one. It must be transparent and participatory and must play a central role; it should not favour the particular interests of certain Member States or groups of Member States. My country cannot permit its sovereignty to be delegated to other countries. Because of our historical tradition, we do not accept negotiating mechanisms that exclude any Member State and cannot accept them in the future. Such practices — which we witnessed recently at the 2005 world summit and during the adoption of the budget in December — weaken the outcome of negotiations. In that regard, my delegation commits itself to continuing its constructive participation in future negotiations to ensure that the reform process takes into account the opinions and aspirations of all Member States.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 122, 124, 128, 129 and 136. I shall make a concluding statement when we have completed our work on the next item.

Agenda item 122 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/60/609/Add.2)

The President: The General Assembly has before it a draft decision, recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report. We shall now take a decision on the draft decision, entitled "Questions deferred for future consideration". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 122 and of all the reports of the Fifth Committee before it.

Statement by the President

The President: The General Assembly has just concluded its consideration of several reports of the Fifth Committee and has adopted the recommendations contained therein. The draft resolution entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" (A/60/831, para. 9) was, as we know, adopted by a recorded vote, following the pattern of the Fifth Committee. While a vote could be viewed as a normal procedure by the General Assembly, we all know that draft resolutions recommended by vote are not the normal practice of the Fifth Committee.

This action today should therefore be regarded as a deviation from a long-standing practice of the Fifth Committee. For nearly two decades, draft resolutions emanating from the Fifth Committee have been adopted without a vote. The consensus mechanism is the hallmark of the work of the work of that Committee. This tradition of consensus for decisions

on budgetary and administrative matters has been generally accepted and welcomed, as we all know. It serves to safeguard the long-term interests of the United Nations as well as those of all Member States, large or small, rich or poor.

Against this background, like the Secretary-General, I regret that it was not possible for the General Assembly to reach consensus on the resolution just adopted, in spite of all the efforts made to reach a negotiated agreement in the Fifth Committee. I want to take this opportunity to thank all members for their tireless work, day and night, to come up with creative ideas to reach consensus during the last few weeks.

However — and this has been underlined by several speakers today — we must not let this lead us to inaction and a pointless discussion of why we failed to agree or what went wrong. Instead, we must look forward and join forces in fulfilling the tasks our leaders entrusted us with at the 2005 world summit. It is essential that we restore the consensus mode of decision-making in the Fifth Committee. We must continue to work for the broadest possible agreement on all the reform issues before us.

So far, we can be proud of our achievements. Ambassador Kumalo mentioned some of them. Through open, transparent and inclusive negotiations, at its sixtieth session the General Assembly has established the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. Later this afternoon, I hope the General Assembly will take a decision on a draft resolution on the election of seven members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. By that, we will take a further step forward towards making peacebuilding a reality in the field, which we have been waiting for for so long.

Tomorrow, we proceed to the historic first election of the 47 members of the Human Rights Council. Negotiations on the crucial issues of the reform and development of the Economic and Social Council are, hopefully, in their concluding stages. Important consultations on the environment and the revitalization of the General Assembly have also been initiated. Later this week, informal consultations on the elaboration of a counter-terrorism strategy will start. Thus, the reform process is continuing in several of its aspects.

In order to effectively comply with the principles and objectives of the Charter, our leaders at the 2005 world summit recognized that we need an efficient, effective and accountable Secretariat. In the coming months, our efforts will increasingly focus on those issues. It is imperative that we move forward and address Secretariat and management reform in a positive spirit, as has been underlined by several representatives today. It is also important that all Member States be involved and fully engaged in the work. It is a common task for all of us.

It is my strong belief that genuine progress can be achieved on the following three tracks.

First, during the next few weeks, the Secretary-General will prepare detailed reports on various issues in pursuance of the resolution just adopted. Those will be submitted in different phases. The first phase, due in a few days, will address accountability, information and communication technology, reporting mechanisms, and budgetary and financial management. In the second phase, in June, the Secretary-General will report on procurement, monitoring and evaluation issues. The third phase, in September, will focus on reforms in human resources management.

In accordance with established procedures, the reports will first be taken up by the Advisory Committee on Budgetary and Administrative Questions and then considered by the Fifth Committee. The reports will provide Member States with essential background information for substantive decisions on important aspects of Secretariat and management reform.

I strongly urge all delegations to actively and constructively engage in the work of the Fifth Committee on those issues, as well as on several important administrative, financial and human resources management issues that the Fifth Committee will be taking up during the course of 2006.

Secondly, under the skilful leadership of the two co-Chairs, Ambassador Akram of Pakistan and Ambassador Rock of Canada, the informal consultations on the Secretary-General's report entitled "Mandating and delivering: Analysis and recommendations to facilitate the review of mandates" is proceeding well and according to schedule. The Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council have already initiated procedures to conduct the review of mandates in their respective areas. I have requested that, to the extent possible, they harmonize their respective programmes of work with

that of the plenary and the meeting we had with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council last month.

A programme of work through the month of June has been presented by the Co-Chairs. It is my expectation that some initial results on the mandate review could be achieved in this period, with Members' help. I appeal to all Member States to continue their close cooperation with the co-Chairs in that process.

Thirdly, the ongoing review on governance and oversight structures in the United Nations aims to enhancing the ability of the Organization to function well and to live up to the high expectations of Member States. The review will build on progress made in strengthening oversight functions, including the development of the independent Audit Advisory Committee to assist the General Assembly in discharging its oversight responsibility.

I firmly believe that we can achieve results on those three tracks in the near future. Recent experience shows that reform is possible. That was demonstrated by the decisions of the General Assembly not only on the issues that I mentioned earlier — the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and so on — but also to create, at the initiative of the Secretary-General, an Ethics Office, which is of course now in operation.

In addition, the Secretary-General has already undertaken a number of reforms under his own authority, such as the protection of staff against retaliation for reporting misconduct. Those are indeed positive achievements and, as our leaders stated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document,

> "We commend the Secretary-General's previous and ongoing efforts to enhance the effective management of the United Nations and his commitment to update the Organization" (*resolution 60/1, para. 163*).

I have said this many times: We are facing a test of multilateralism. We need to make the United Nations stronger and better equipped to deal with the urgent problems and needs in the world around us. To achieve that, we must work together. Working together is much more powerful than working alone. We must deepen the dialogue between delegations and different groups at the United Nations. We must listen to each other, we must gain a better understanding of each other's positions, and we must move from polarization to cooperation. A climate of trust and confidence must be established and must guide our endeavours. It is in our common interest and in the interest of the United Nations and the peoples of the United Nations.

Therefore, I encourage each and every representative to reach out to his or her colleagues and to start a constructive and forward-looking discussion of what we must do to make this Organization — our United Nations — work better for the benefit of our peoples. If we do that in a positive spirit and create the right conditions for fruitful negotiations in good faith, I am hopeful that we will see concrete results in Secretariat and management reform during the coming months. To put it very simply, let us go to work.

The meeting was suspended at 4.20 p.m. and resumed at 4.35 p.m.

Agenda item 112

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(f) Election of seven members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission

Draft resolution A/60/L.52

Statement by the President

The President: On 20 December 2005, the General Assembly made history. By creating the Peacebuilding Commission the Assembly decided to take an important step to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to maintain sustainable peace and security. The Peacebuilding Commission is an innovative body that is to assist countries on the arduous road from violent conflict to recovery, reconstruction and development.

The composition of the Organizational Committee of the Commission is clearly spelled out in resolution 60/180. In the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1), our leaders had already decided on the different categories of members of the Organizational Committee. As members will recall, during those negotiations some voiced strong concern that the Committee lacked in legitimacy because many would not have the possibility of being elected or selected.

We all took that argument seriously and made the very difficult decision to open up the agreed text of the World Summit Outcome. A category was created to allow the General Assembly to elect seven additional members from regions not sufficiently represented in the other categories of the Organizational Committee, giving particular consideration to those countries that had experienced post-conflict recovery.

More than four months have passed since 20 December. We have discussed regional representation at length in both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The decision to allow the Peacebuilding Commission to become operational is long overdue. The World Summit Outcome requested that the Peacebuilding Commission begin its work no later than 31 December 2005. I acknowledge the difficulties members have faced during their discussions, in particular since the composition of the Peacebuilding Commission is innovative. Let us not forget that, according to its mandate, one of the main purposes of the Peacebuilding Commission is to bring together actors to marshal resources and to advise on, and propose, integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. I am gratified that, in all categories of the Organizational Committee, members have shown commitment and flexibility in spite of what I know are very strongly held views.

Members now have in front of them draft resolution A/60/L.52, entitled "Election of seven members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission". The draft resolution is based on paragraphs 4 (a) to (e) and 5 of General Assembly resolution 60/180, and on Security Council resolution 1645 (2005). More specifically, the draft resolution implements paragraph 4 (e) of resolution 60/180, giving the General Assembly a mandate to elect seven additional members, giving due consideration to representation from all regional groups in the overall composition of the Organizational Committee and to representation from countries that have experienced post-conflict recovery.

The distribution of seats among the five regional groups for this year is based on the elections and selections in the other four categories set out in paragraphs 4 (a) to (d) of resolution 60/180 and communicated to the Secretary-General in accordance with the following: a letter from the President of the Security Council dated 17 January 2006; Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/3, entitled "Membership from the Economic and Social Council in the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission pursuant to paragraph 4 (b) of General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005)", which was adopted on 8 May 2006; a letter from the facilitator for the group of the top 10 providers of contributions to the United Nations dated 8 May 2006; and a letter from the facilitator for the group of the top 10 troop-contributing countries dated 5 May 2006.

The letters from the facilitators of the donor and troop-contributing categories will be distributed as official United Nations documents. I take note of, and welcome, the fact that both the donor and the troop-contributing categories foresee some rotation among their members. Let me take this opportunity to thank everyone who was involved — the Security Council, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the facilitator for the troop contributors and the facilitator for the donor countries — for the tireless work they have done to achieve this result.

The General Assembly will elect seven members for this year, distributed among the five regional groups as follows: two seats for African States, one seat for Asian States, one seat for Eastern European States, three seats for Latin American and Caribbean States and no seat for Western European and other States.

I understand that the Economic and Social Council will conduct its elections on 12 May. I propose that the elections in the General Assembly take place on 16 May in the afternoon. Member States are invited to inform the Secretariat of their candidatures or to confirm them before 16 May. I understand that the Secretariat will prepare a list of candidates for information purposes.

The draft resolution sets out that the rules of procedure and established practices of the General Assembly for the election of members of its subsidiary bodies shall apply to the elections to the Organizational Committee.

The elected members will serve for renewable terms of two years, beginning on the day of the first meeting of the Organizational Committee. A new element introduced in the draft resolution is that the term of membership shall be staggered, and that two members from different regional groups, to be drawn

by lots in the first election, shall serve for an initial period of one year. That will allow for continuity and for avoiding having all the members from the General Assembly category change at the same time. Those members serving for only one year are eligible for subsequent periods of two years.

The draft resolution will also allow the General Assembly to carry out an annual review of its distribution of seats based on changes in the membership in other categories in the Organizational Committee. After all, as members will recall, the General Assembly category was created in order to provide balanced representation from all regional groups, thus ensuring legitimacy.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that representation from all regional groups in the overall composition of the Organizational Committee is not the only criterion for the General Assembly category. Countries that have gone through difficult periods of post-conflict recovery will be a special asset for the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. I am confident that the Assembly will keep that in mind when electing the members of the Committee.

In conclusion, let me thank the Assembly for what has indeed been hard work for practically all of us, as well as for its cooperation with, and support for, me and my Office. We will soon leave the process of the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission behind us. Let us now concentrate on the important work of preparing for the first meeting of the Organizational Committee and, even more important, for the first country-specific meeting. As I have said many times, our work at the United Nations must always go through a field test. I would strongly hope that the Peacebuilding Commission will go through that field test before the end of the sixtieth session. We owe that to all those who are in dire need of post-conflict recovery.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/60/L.52. Before giving the floor to the representative of Colombia in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made from delegations for their seats.

I give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mrs. Holguín (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Our Group actively participated in the process of consultations that established the Peacebuilding Commission. We reiterate our commitment to that initiative and to its implementation.

We regret that the key proposal by the States of Latin America and the Caribbean is not reflected in the draft resolution before us today. We would like to express our great concern about the fact that this noble initiative has been diminished and that it does not include the right of every Member State to participate equally.

After several months of discussions, it is evident to us today that the Commission is a United Nations body that does not reflect the principle of equitable regional representation. As proposed, it will be a body composed mainly of donors and troop contributors. The principle of equitable regional representation incorporated in other bodies has been ignored on this occasion. We wonder whether that will be the future trend in the Organization, and whether we should strive to return to the principles and practices of participation in subsidiary bodies.

The important thing is not to create false hopes that result in discussions that do not lead to promoting understanding within the Organization. We are convinced that it would be beneficial for the Organization to review the matter of composition in the future, for the experiences and contributions of all regions will be of value for the proper functioning of the Commission. The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States reiterates that experience in post-conflict situations must be taken into account.

For Latin American and Caribbean States, the principle of equitable regional representation is fundamental to strengthening universal multilateralism. In the framework of the consultations to which I have referred, we emphasized the need for balanced representation in the overall composition of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. The concept of balanced representation was referred to by the President during the adoption of resolution 60/180, when he acknowledged that balanced representation among all regional groups was a factor that ensured the legitimacy of the Commission.

As you, Mr. President, told us:

> "Finally, in order to have balanced representation from all regional groups, and thus to ensure legitimacy, the General Assembly will elect seven additional members." *(A/60/PV.66, p. 3)*

We would like also to express our concern at the prospect of reducing the space given to the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, not only in this specific case, but with respect to other areas of the reform as well. The principles that should guide us are those of inclusion and equitable geographic representation for all regional groups.

In that context, we wish to note that the General Assembly category was created to ensure a more balanced representation of the regional groups in order to ensure equitable representation in and a sense of belonging to the Committee.

We therefore believe that under-representation by regional groups in the overall composition must be considered in the election of the members of the Organizational Committee by the General Assembly. This is our interpretation of the fourth preambular paragraph and of operative paragraphs 2 and 8.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/60/L.52.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/60/L.52. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.52?

Draft resolution A/60/L.52 was adopted (resolution 60/261).

The President: I shall now give the floor to those representatives wishing to make statements in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Miller (United States of America): The United States was pleased to join consensus today to support hallmark measures in the Economic and Social Council and now in the General Assembly to establish procedures for the selection of representatives to the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Getting to this point has required careful diplomacy, consideration of multiple interests and the give and take of innumerable direct conversations in which representatives of all regions worked together. The United States has been an active participant.

The process was prolonged, and the results reflect compromises. We particularly note in that regard the aspiration of our Latin American and Caribbean neighbours to gain enhanced representation in future years. The United States supports that aspiration and the adjustments that can be made annually and biannually to affect the overall composition of the Organizational Committee in order to make it as acceptable and effective as possible.

We would also particularly emphasize the potential contribution of nations that have experienced post-conflict recovery. The resolution we have just adopted sustains that intent.

We now need to move ahead swiftly to get the Peacebuilding Commission up and running. The body we have established is a promising outcome of United Nations reform. The quality of the members whom we select and the diversity of skills, experience and influence that they will bring to the table will be critical to our mutual goal of building stability in countries that have emerged from conflict.

Rules of procedure of the Peacebuilding Commission must be designed to hasten the achievement of results, avoiding circuitous debate and duplicative efforts, and focusing on the work of country-specific committees and their recommendations.

Mr. Kapoma (Zambia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group following the adoption by the General Assembly of the framework resolution on the election of seven members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Let me at the outset pay tribute to you, Mr. President, and to all who facilitated in one way or another the adoption of this resolution. We owe them all a debt of gratitude.

It is to be recalled that in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, our leaders decided to establish a Peacebuilding Commission and that it should begin its work no later than 31 December 2005. Consequently, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/180, on the Peacebuilding Commission, on 20 December 2005.

It has taken a little more than four months for the General Assembly to adopt this enabling resolution, which will have the effect of operationalizing the Peacebuilding Commission. The African Group, like

others, is indeed pleased with the adoption of the resolution. In that regard, we wish, however, to make some observations on some of its provisions.

While taking note of operative paragraph 8, which talks about setting no precedent for future elections and states that the distribution of seats as set out in operative paragraph 2 will be reviewed annually, on the basis of changes in the membership of other categories, the African Group would like to see in future more equitable geographical representation, which would give Africa no less than seven seats.

It should be noted that in the Security Council category, the African representation would be for only one year, in view of the departure from the Council of the United Republic of Tanzania at the end of this year. It is our sincere hope that both the Security Council and the General Assembly would favourably consider electing another African Member State to replace the United Republic of Tanzania in the Security Council category, or, indeed, find an alternative in other categories.

The African Group is making this earnest appeal against the background of the Peacebuilding Commission's having been established to deal with global conflict situations. In that regard, it is no exaggeration to state that the African continent has an unenviable share of the conflicts in the world — indeed, a large share. It is therefore natural, in our view, that African should be given special consideration.

In terms of operative paragraph 2, the African Group wishes to note that, if a region submits the exact number of candidates that have been agreed upon, there should be no need for elections, but, rather, such members should be deemed as having been duly selected.

In conclusion, we have made these observations mindful of the many concessions and compromises that have made it possible for the General Assembly to adopt this framework resolution. The African Group adequately demonstrated, during the protracted consultations, its commitment to the adoption of this resolution. We therefore look forward with commitment and zeal in equal measure to the operationalization of the Peacebuilding Commission. It remains our sincere hope that, indeed, the Commission will make a difference for countries in need of support from the international community in addressing post-conflict situations.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, France welcomes the consensus adoption of the resolution you submitted to us. This resolution will pave the way for the establishment of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. My delegation would like to thank you in particular for the vital role that you and your colleagues played in achieving this successful outcome.

Several months, and efforts made by one and all, were required to achieve this, because there were numerous expressions of interest on the part of Member States wishing to serve on the Commission. Those expressions of interest were all, of course, legitimate.

I believe we have attained the best possible result, because we also had to bear in mind the overarching need to preserve the Commission's original nature. As we know, one of the essential strong points of the Commission, which will ensure its effectiveness for countries emerging from conflict, relates to its unique composition, which is based, inter alia, on participation by Member States in a position in one way or another to make a concrete contribution in a structural sense.

I wish, however, to respond to some of the concerns that have been voiced. France considers that all regional groups without exception are entitled to fair representation in the Organizational Committee by their member States. That, of course, is true for the countries of Latin American and the Caribbean, many of which have experienced post-conflict situations, and many of which are providing recognized assistance in that area. We are convinced that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has an important contribution to make to the Commission. France therefore intends to endorse the candidacy of a member from that region on the next occasion that the two seats on the Organizational Committee for non-permanent members of the Security Council are filled. Let me add that, in our view, it goes without saying that the seat that will be vacated at the end of this year by the United Republic of Tanzania should go to another country representing Africa.

Our immediate priority must be to successfully launch the Peacebuilding Commission. To that end it is

important for the Organizational Committee, once all its members have been selected, to expeditiously settle the initial procedural matters that are essential to the practical functioning of the Commission. Over the next few weeks it should thus be in a position to identify the first situations to be placed on the Commission's agenda, so that the Commission can devote itself without further ado to providing the expected support for countries emerging from conflict.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

I wish to make some brief informal remarks. I mentioned in my opening statement on this item that the Peacebuilding Commission is to assist countries on the arduous road from violent conflict to recovery, reconstruction and development. I think we all recognize that we too have travelled an arduous road in reaching the conclusion of our discussions on the resolution we have just adopted. I have already expressed my thanks for members' cooperation.

It is always painful and difficult when one makes institutional decisions. It is no coincidence that our most difficult and complicated negotiations have been on the two major institutional reforms that we have negotiated: the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. We should be aware that it is natural that we have those more difficult discussions when it comes to setting up new institutions.

Again, I thank members for their cooperation. Let us be reminded that, towards the end of today's resolution, we state very clearly that, as has been noted by many speakers today, the distribution of seats will be reviewed annually, not least in order to give due consideration to the representation of all regional groups in the overall composition of the Organizational Committee.

Now, I urge that we look to the future again, in the spirit of our discussion earlier on management and Secretariat reform. We must look forward and focus on setting up the Organizational Committee, and on taking quick decisions on the country-specific Peacebuilding Commission: that, as I said in my introductory remarks, is where we will be tested. The test lies out there in the realities: I just came back from Africa, and I see the desperate need in that continent and in other parts of the world for the Peacebuilding Commission as a catalyst enabling us to do what we have to do, namely not desert a country that has gone through conflict.

We have paid a heavy price for leaving these conflicts when the CNN cameras disappear. We have to make sure that we are there for reconstruction, recovery, development, reconciliation processes and setting up institutions, so that conflicts do not erupt again. There is a tragic statistic showing that conflicts erupt within five years after they have finished because we do not stay on. Now, with the Peacebuilding Commission, in the field, we will be able to be catalysts for action, action not only by a better and better coordinated United Nations, but also by regional organizations, civil society and the private sector: all in very close cooperation under the guidance of the nations involved and with respect for sovereignty. This is a qualitative step forward for the United Nations; it could mean that the Security Council will have less to do in the future.

So, let us now look forward. We have had a painful, difficult discussion, which is behind us; now is the time to prove that the Peacebuilding Commission can make a difference for all those people out there who have suffered through conflict and who now need advice from the members of the Organizational Committee, but above all from those who will serve on the country-specific Peacebuilding Commission: that is where we will make a difference.

We are finally reaching one destination on this arduous road, and the General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 112.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.